REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 4-6, 9-11 and 15 are amended to eliminate multiple dependencies. Prompt and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Respectfully submitted,

William P. Berridge
Registration No. 30,042

Thomas J. Pardini
Registration No. 30,411

WPB:TJP/cmm

Attachment: Appendix

Date: March 4, 2002

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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APPENDIX

Changes to Claims:

The following are marked-up versions of the amended claims:

4. (Amended) Oligonucleotides according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 3~~, characterised in that "N" represents inosine.

5. (Amended) Oligonucleotides according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 3~~, characterised in that they comprise a mixture of oligonucleotides comprising sequences included in one of sequences SEQ ID N° 1 to 4 in which all of the nucleotides A, T, C and G are represented at each of the positions where "N" appears.

6. (Amended) Probe for the detection, in a biological sample, of bacteria belonging to the order of *Spirochaetales* characterised in that they include a nucleotide according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 5~~.

9. (Amended) Method to determine whether at least one bacteria belonging to the order of *Spirochaetales* is present in a sample containing or likely to contain nucleic acids from at least one such bacteria, characterised in that the said sample is put into contact with at least one probe according to claim 6 ~~any one of claims 6 to 8~~, then to determine whether a hybridation complex is formed between the probe and the nucleic acid in the sample.

10. (Amended) Nucleotide primer that can be used for the synthesis in the presence of a polymerase, and the total or partial sequencing of gene *rpoB* in any one of the species of bacteria belonging to the order of *Spirochaetales*, characterised in that it includes an oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 to 5~~.

11. (Amended) Method according to claim 9, characterised in that a fragment of gene *rpoB* of the said bacteria is amplified with at least one primer ~~according to claim 10. The~~ that can be used for the synthesis in the presence of a polymerase, and the total or partial sequencing of gene *rpoB* in any one of the species of bacteria belonging to the order of

Spirochaetales, and thereafter ~~according to claim 10. The~~ said fragment is ~~then~~ put into contact with ~~a~~ the probe of the said bacteria ~~according to one of claims 6 to 8~~, and whether a hybridation complex is formed between the said probe and the said fragment is determined.

15. (Amended) Gene therapy probe, characterised in that it includes an oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 to 5~~.

A. primers 16S FDI/RD3

B. primers *rpoB* 1730D/2900R

FIG. 1

REPLACEMENT PAGE (RULE 26)

A. primers *rpoB* 1730D/2900R

B. primers *rpoB* 1730D/3800R

C. primers 16S FDI/RD3

FIG. 2

REPLACEMENT PAGE (RULE 26)